

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 remain in the application.

First, claims 6-11 stand objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c) as being in improper form because a multiple dependent claim may not depend from another multiple dependent claim. Claims 6-11 have been amended by Applicant to provide for proper dependency.

Second, claims 1 and 11 stand objected to under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, because the limitation "the rotary actuator" in lines 7 and 8 of claim 1 lacks proper antecedent basis and because claim 11 is an improper omnibus claim. Applicant has also amended claims 1 and 11 to correct the 112 deficiencies.

Finally, claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by US Patent No. 4,518,180 to Kleefeldt et al. The Examiner states that Kleefeldt shows a power door latch assembly having a ratchet 2, a pawl 3, a drive actuator 17, 18, 21, a drive controller 24, and a rotary actuator 9. The ratchet 2 having at least one detent surface 7,8 and biasing means 16. The drive actuator has a prime mover 17 and an output member 18 in engagement with the rotary actuator 9 through a pin 9b. A releasable coupling 23 is coupled in parallel with the drive mechanism of the drive actuator and between the primary mover 17 and the output member 18. A drive controller 24 is coupled to the releasable coupling 23.

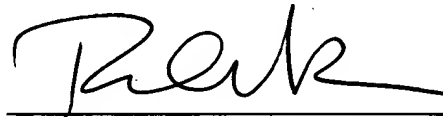
However, the releasable coupling 23 in Kleefeldt is an electric switch. In contradistinction, the releasable coupling in the subject invention as amended to more clearly point out in claims 1 and 11 is a mechanical clutch (102). The clutch (102) is directly connected between the prime mover (98) and the output member (104) for selectively transferring torque

between the prime mover (98) and the rotary actuator (54). Therefore, amended claim 1 is now clearly distinguished over the cited prior art and in condition for more favorable consideration.

Attached hereto is a marked up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment for the purpose of clarifying the invention.

Accordingly, it is believed that the application is in condition for more favorable consideration and allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

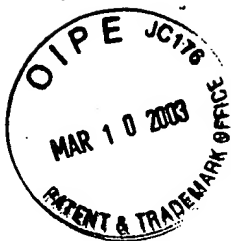


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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1 has been amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A power door latch assembly for engaging a door striker, comprising:
a ratchet for engaging the striker, the ratchet being rotatable between a closed position and an open position and including at least one detent surface and biasing member [means] for biasing the ratchet towards the open position;

a pawl for engaging the at least one detent surface to selectively resist rotation of the ratchet towards the open position;

a rotary actuator for rotating the ratchet toward the closed position and for disengaging the pawl from the at least one detent surface;

a drive actuator including a prime mover, an output member in engagement with the rotary actuator, and a clutch [releasable coupling] coupled between the prime mover and the output member for selectively transferring torque between the prime mover and the rotary actuator;

a drive controller for controlling the operation of the drive actuator, the drive controller being coupled to the clutch [releasable coupling] and being configured for disengaging the prime mover from the rotary actuator when the ratchet is disposed in one of the closed and open positions; and

[a rotary actuator characterized by] said rotary actuator having a cinching arm engaging said ratchet upon rotation of said rotary actuator in a first sense to rotate the ratchet towards the closed position, and said rotary actuator having a relating arm engaging said pawl upon rotation of said rotary actuator in a second sense opposite said first sense to disengage the pawl from the at least one detent surface.

Claim 4 has been amended as follows:

4. (Amended) The power door latch assembly according to claim 3 [any one of claims 1 to 3], wherein the rotary actuator includes a lost motion linkage for allowing limited rotational movement of the ratchet relative to the rotary actuator when the ratchet is disposed in the open position.

Claim 6 has been amended as follows:

6. (Amended) The power door latch assembly according to claim 5 [any one of claims 2 to 5], wherein the drive controller includes a first switch for selectively operating the prime mover, and the pawl includes a finger disposed for engagement with the first switch when the rotary actuator is disposed in the null position.

Claim 7 has been amended as follows:

7. (Amended) The power door latch assembly according to claim 6 [any one of claims 2 to 6], wherein the drive controller includes a second switch for selectively operating the clutch [releasable coupling], and the ratchet includes a cam surface disposed for engagement with the second switch when the ratchet is disposed in the closed position.

Claim 8 has been amended as follows:

8. (Amended) The power door latch assembly according to claim 7 [any one of claims 1 to 7], including a manual release lever, and the pawl includes an arm coupled to the release lever for releasing the pawl from the ratchet upon activation of the release lever.

Claim 9 has been amended as follows:

9. (Amended) The power door latch assembly according to claim 8 [any one of claims 1 to 8], wherein the ratchet is disposed for rotation about a first axis, and the pawl is disposed for rotation for about a fixed axis parallel to the first axis.

Claim 11 has been amended as follows:

11. A door assembly comprising:

a door pivotable about a door axis and including a latch actuation [operation] lever and an aperture for receiving a striker plate therein; and

a power door latch assembly [according to any of the preceding claims, the power door latch assembly being] disposed within the door and being in communication with the latch actuation lever for selectively securing the door to the striker plate in accordance with a state of the actuation lever; the power door latch assembly including a ratchet for engaging the striker, the ratchet being rotatable between a closed position and an open position and including at least one detent surface and biasing member for biasing the ratchet towards the open position;

a pawl for engaging the at least one detent surface to selectively resist rotation of the ratchet towards the open position;

a rotary actuator for rotating the ratchet toward the closed position and for disengaging the pawl from the at least one detent surface;

a drive actuator including a prime mover, an output member in engagement with the rotary actuator, and a clutch coupled between the prime mover and the output member for selectively transferring torque between the prime mover and the rotary actuator;

a drive controller for controlling the operation of the drive actuator, the drive controller being coupled to the clutch and being configured for disengaging the prime mover from the rotary actuator when the ratchet is disposed in one of the closed and open positions; and

said rotary actuator having a cinching arm engaging said ratchet upon rotation of said rotary actuator in a first sense to rotate the ratchet towards the closed position, and said rotary actuator having a relating arm engaging said pawl upon rotation of said rotary actuator in a second sense opposite said first sense to disengage the pawl from the at least one detent surface.